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THE WARRIOR

THE BATTLE OF ALAMEIN WAS THE TURNING POINT OF THE WAR, BUT THAT GREAT VICTORY WAS NOT ACHIEVED WITHOUT A TREMENDOUS SACRIFICE OF HUMAN LIFE. SOME BATTALIONS WERE ALMOST WIPED OUT IN THE GRINDING, NERVE-RACKING ADVANCE THROUGH ENEMY MINEFIELDS IN THE FACE OF A CONCENTRATED BARRAGE...



Chapter 1. *Forbidden to Fight*

AS THE ADVANCE FORGED ON ACROSS THE SHELL-TORN DESERT, COLONEL 'BUTCHER' BONNOR RACED ABOUT HIS SECTOR IN A JEEP, DRIVING HIS MEN RUTHLESSLY...

GET YOUR SQUADRON ON TO THAT RIDGE, MAJOR! I KNOW IT'S TOUGH POUNDING, BUT WE'VE GOT TO KEEP PRESSING ON!



AT THE COLONEL'S COMMAND, THE SECOND BATTALION, WEYSHIRE REGIMENT, DROVE ON WITH GRIM DETERMINATION. BUT THE WITHERING HAIL OF FIRE FROM THE GERMAN LINES WAS TAKING A HORRIFYING TOLL...



THEY ARE MADMEN, HORST... MADMEN! OUR MINEFIELD IS KILLING THEM IN THEIR HUNDREDS... AND STILL THEY KEEP ON!

AT LAST, EVEN THE RELENTLESS 'BUTCHER' BONNOR SAW IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO PRESS HOME THE ATTACK UNTIL THE MINEFIELD WAS CLEARED...

WE CAN DO NOTHING FURTHER UNTIL WE CLEAR A CORRIDOR THROUGH THE MINES. I REFUSE TO SEND MY MEN TO CERTAIN DESTRUCTION. ORDER ALL FORMATIONS TO STAND FAST!

YES, SIR!



WITHIN THIRTY MINUTES, COLONEL BONNOR WAS CALLED TO BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS. HE EXPLAINED WHY HE HAD MADE SUCH A DECISION TO THE BRIGADIER...



I DRIVE MY MEN TO THE LIMIT OF ENDURANCE, SIR—BUT THIS IS MURDER! TO PRESS ON THROUGH THAT MINEFIELD WILL MEAN WIPING OUT A BATTALION TO NO PURPOSE WHATEVER!

THE BRIGADIER LISTENED IN STONY SILENCE. HIS REPLY WAS CURT AND DECISIVE...

I DON'T BELIEVE IN ASKING MY OFFICERS TO PASS ON ORDERS IN WHICH THEY HAVE NO FAITH, BONNOR. YOU WILL BE RELIEVED OF YOUR COMMAND, AS FROM NOW...



'BUTCHER' BONNOR WAS STUNNED. HE FELT LIKE ARGUING, BUT THE STEELY EYES OF THE BRIGADIER SHOWED THAT IT WOULD BE USELESS...



SO, WHILE THE BATTLE THUNDERED TO ITS CLIMAX, 'BUTCHER' BONNOR KICKED HIS HEELS AT BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS, WAITING FOR A PLANE TO FLY HIM BACK TO CAIRO - AND OUT OF THE WAR...



THIS IS THE FINAL TWIST OF IRONY. I'M TO BE BOWLED OUT BECAUSE THEY RECKON I'M NOT RUTHLESS ENOUGH AND THEY'VE ALWAYS CALLED ME 'BUTCHER'.

AS HE PACED THE HEADQUARTERS LINES, A STREAM OF WOUNDED ARRIVED BY FIELD AMBULANCE, TO LIE ON STRETCHERS, WAITING FOR PLANES TO FLY THEM BACK TO CAIRO...

WEYSHIRES —
GOOD GRIEF,
THEY CAUGHT A
PACKET!



SUDDENLY, A SIREN SCREECHED A WARNING. THREE HIGH-FLYING JUNKERS EIGHTY-EIGHTS CAME WHISTLING DOWN. AS THE FIRST STICK OF BOMBS STRUCK WITH SHATTERING EXPLOSIONS, BONNOR'S FIRST THOUGHT WAS FOR THE WOUNDED...



The Warrior

WITH THE GROUND SHUDDERING BENEATH THE TERRIBLE BOMBARDMENT, THE COLONEL HELPED TO CARRY THE WOUNDED TO SHELTER...



BUT AS HE STOOPED TOWARDS ONE STRETCHER, THE OCCUPANT, A YOUNGSTER WITH BITTER EYES, SNAPPED AT HIM...

YOU'RE THE BUTCHER! I DON'T WANT YOU ANYWHERE NEAR ME, YOU MURDERER!



'BUTCHER' BONNOR COULD ONLY STARE INCREDULOUSLY WHILE THE WOUNDED MAN RAVED AT HIM...

ALL MY MATES WERE KILLED BEFORE THEY MOVED TEN YARDS. I ONLY JUST ESCAPED... YOU'LL HAVE EVERY MAN IN THE REGIMENT SLAUGHTERED BEFORE YOU'RE SATISFIED!



THERE WAS NOTHING BUT HATRED AND CONTEMPT ON THE YOUNG SOLDIER'S PAIN-HAGGARD FACE...

YOU OLD OFFICERS ARE ALL THE SAME. HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF A C.O. GETTING KILLED IN ACTION? NOT LIKELY! YOUR KIND DIE IN BED!



BONNOR WANTED TO EXPLAIN THAT HE HAD ONLY DONE HIS DUTY... THAT HE HAD NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO ORDER HIS MEN INTO BATTLE UNTIL THE ODDS PROVED IMPOSSIBLE...



AND YET THE BOY IS RIGHT IN A WAY... THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE I'VE THOUGHT OF THE COST OF AN ATTACK IN FLESH AND BLOOD!

BUT BONNOR COULD EXPLAIN NOTHING. IN ANY CASE, THE BOY WOULD NOT HAVE UNDERSTOOD. YET THE YOUNG SOLDIER'S BITTER JIBE WOULD ALWAYS RANKLE...

MY KIND DIE IN BED! I SUPPOSE HE'S RIGHT. NOW, I'LL BE GIVEN A SOFT JOB. I'M A HAS BEEN...

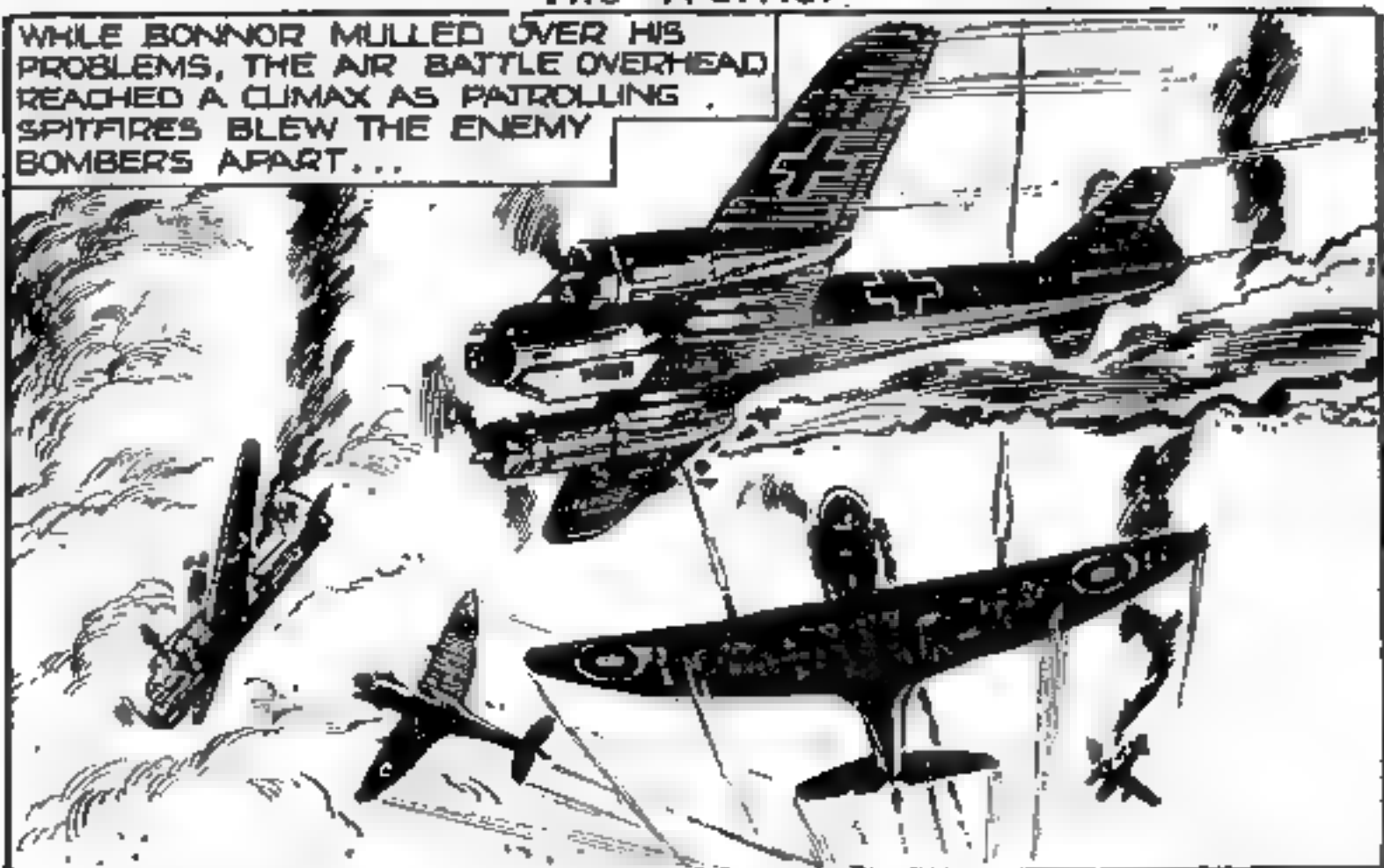


BONNOR WAS BEGINNING TO REALISE THAT HE WAS NO LONGER A MAN OF ANY IMPORTANCE... AN AGEING COLONEL, GETTING IN THE WAY...

THE SOONER I PACK UP, THE BETTER!



WHILE BONNOR MULLED OVER HIS PROBLEMS, THE AIR BATTLE OVERHEAD REACHED A CLIMAX AS PATROLLING SPITFIRES BLEW THE ENEMY BOMBERS APART...



COMPARATIVE QUIET CAME TO THE HEADQUARTERS. THAT NIGHT, BONNOR DINED WITH A GREY-HAIRED MAJOR AT A TABLE APART FROM THE OTHERS...



WE'RE LIKE A COUPLE OF FARIAS / I'M A FAILURE... UNWELCOME, I WONDER WHAT THIS CHAP IS ?

THE MAJOR GAVE A SURPRISING ANSWER TO THE COLONEL'S QUESTION...

I'VE BEEN WITH THE ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT, BUT NOW THEY'RE SENDING ME TO FIJI, SIR!

FIJI? I KNOW IT WELL / SUVA. I SPENT MY BOYHOOD IN SUVA AND THE ISLANDS... BUT WHAT ARE THEY SENDING YOU THERE FOR?



I'M TO RAISE AND TRAIN A NATIVE BATTALION. THE FIJIANS WILL MAKE MAGNIFICENT FIGHTERS...

MAJOR ROBERT LAMBERT SEEMED GLAD TO HAVE SOMEONE TO CONFIDE IN. AND COLONEL BONNOR WAS INTERESTED...

MY FATHER IS COLONEL ASHTON LAMBERT. HE'S NEARLY BLIND, NOW, POOR OLD BOY... HAVEN'T SEEN HIM FOR YEARS!



FATHER WAS DISAPPOINTED IN ME WHEN I WAS TRANSFERRED TO ORDONANCE BECAUSE OF SHORT SIGHT I'D HAVE DONE ANYTHING TO MAKE HIM PROUD OF ME BUT ALL I CAN DO IS TRAIN OTHER MEN TO FIGHT

'BUTCHER' BONNOR FELT A TWINGE OF SYMPATHY FOR THE MAJOR HERE WAS ANOTHER SOLDIER WHO WOULD DIE IN BED

THERE WAS SOMETHING ELSE ABOUT LAMBERT - HE WAS OLD FOR AN OFFICER, BY THE HARSH STANDARDS OF WAR AND SO WAS HE 'BUTCHER' BONNOR



Chapter 2. *Change of Identity*

THAT NIGHT, A YOUNG PILOT-OFFICER LANDED HIS TRANSPORT PLANE AT HEADQUARTERS, AND WAITED IMPATIENTLY FOR COLONEL BONNOR AND MAJOR LAMBERT.

IF WE DON'T GET TO CAIRO DURING THE NIGHT, WE'LL BE A SITTING DUCK FOR ANY STRAY JERRY FIGHTER. JUST MY LUCK TO GET THE CHOPPER FLYING A COUPLE OF DEADBEATS BACK TO BASE!

IT WAS STILL DARK WHEN 'THE BUTCHER' WAS WAKENED, BUT DAWN WAS NOT FAR OFF...

THE PLANE IS HERE, SIR! I'VE GOT YOU SOME BREAKFAST!

THANKS.
I'LL BE OUT
SOON!

THE PILOT WAS BECOMING MORE
AND MORE IMPATIENT ...

IF THEY WANT
TO GET SHOT UP IN
BROAD DAYLIGHT
THEY'RE GOING THE
RIGHT WAY ABOUT
IT!



AT THE LAST MINUTE, THE BUTCHER FOUND
HE HAD FORGOTTEN HIS DIARY...

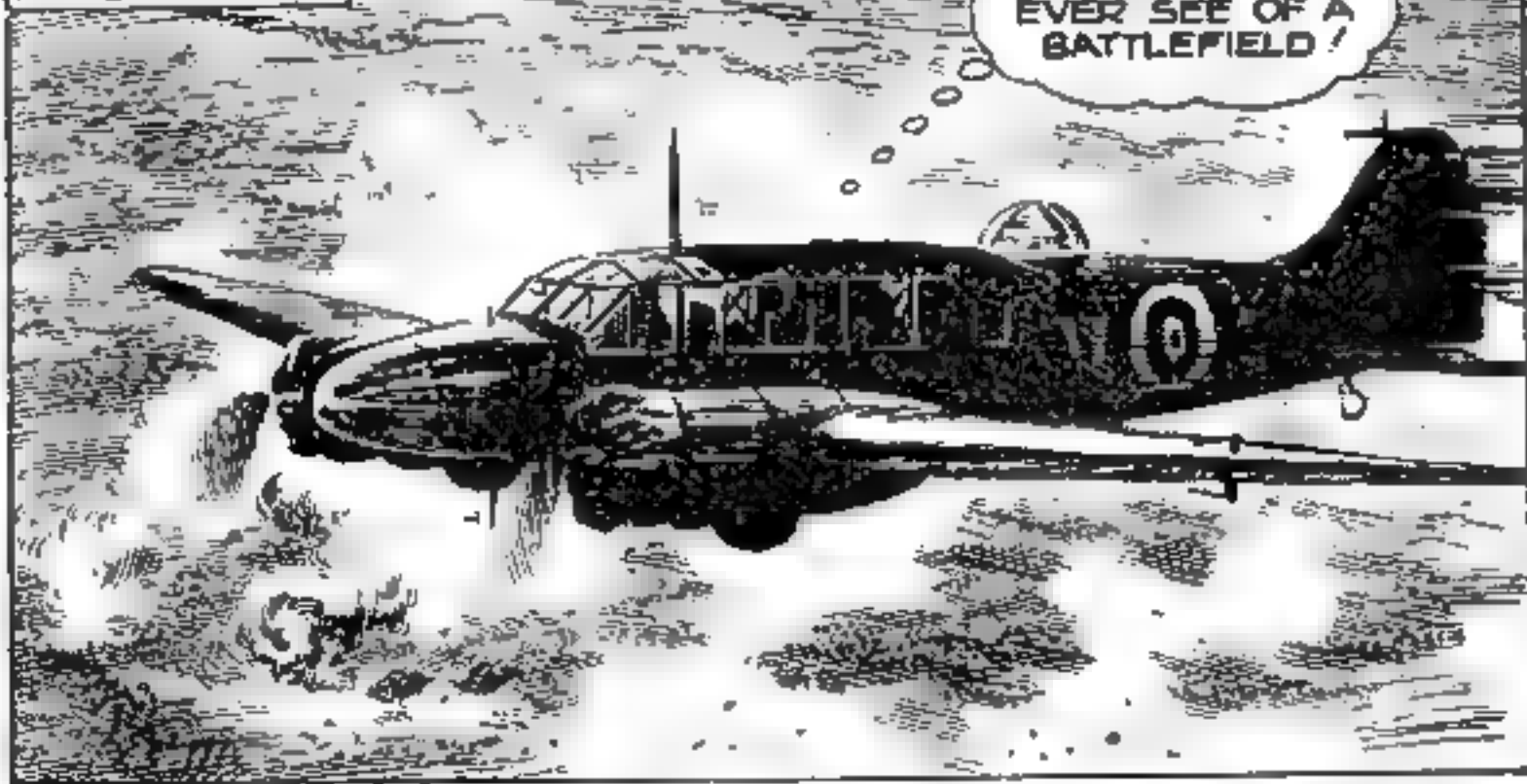
OLD IDIOT!
WELL, WE'RE
STUCK WITH A
DAYLIGHT HOP NOW.
I'LL HAVE TO KEEP
CLEAR OF THE
USUAL ROUTES.

I MUST
GET IT!
WON'T BE
LONG...



WHEN AT LAST THEY WERE AIRBORNE, THE COLONEL TURNED AND GLANCED BACK TO WHERE THE CLOSING STAGES OF THE ALAMEIN BATTLE WERE BEING FOUGHT OUT ...

THAT'S THE LAST I'LL EVER SEE OF A BATTLEFIELD!

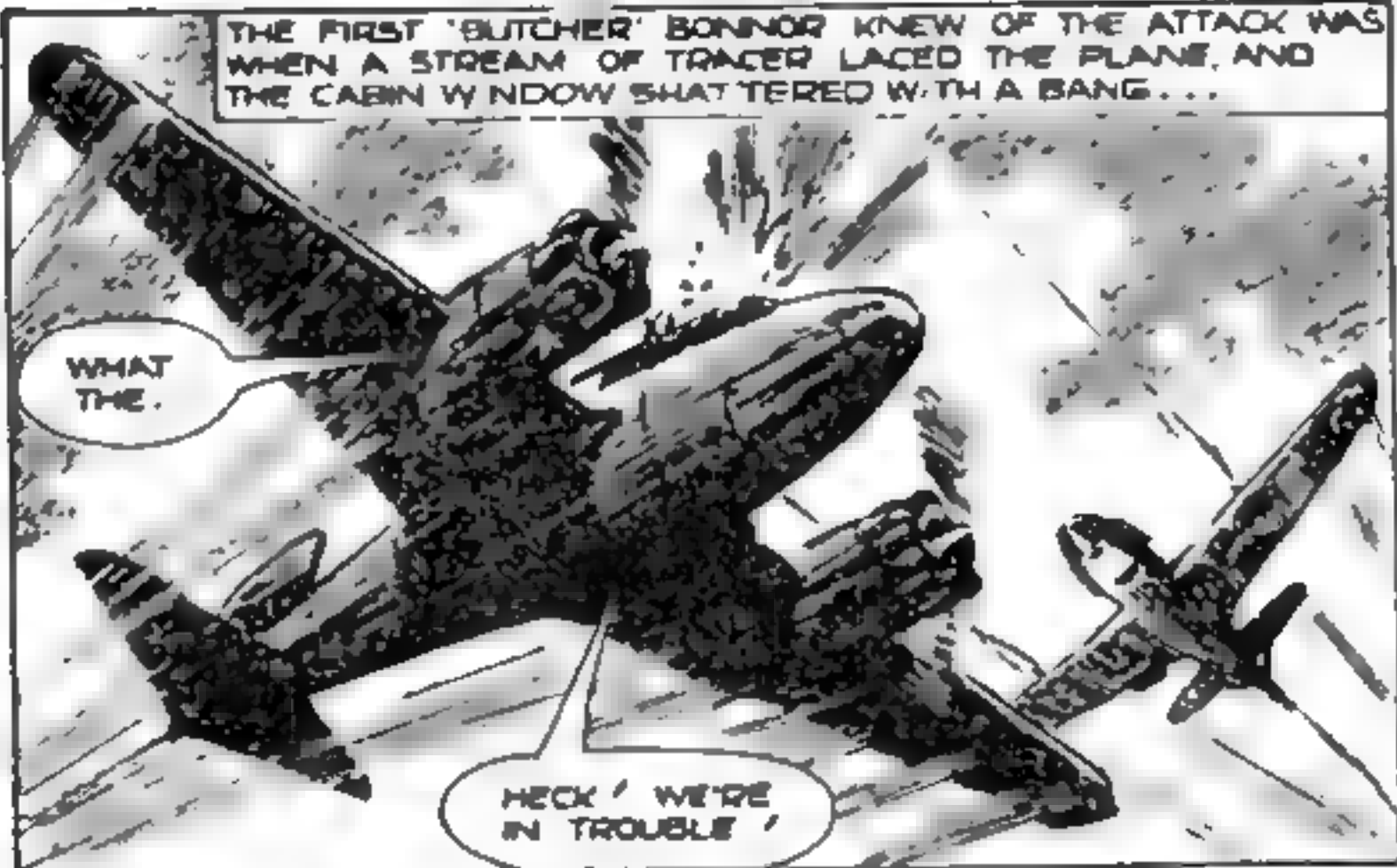


THE PILOT TOOK A WIDE DETOUR TO THE SOUTH. IT WAS A MISTAKE, FOR A MARAUDING MESSERSCHMITT SPOTTED THE ANSON ...



ENGLANDER TRANSPORT PLANE!
THIS IS TOO EASY!

THE FIRST 'BUTCHER' BONNOR KNEW OF THE ATTACK WAS WHEN A STREAM OF TRACER LACED THE PLANE, AND THE CABIN WINDOW SHATTERED WITH A BANG...



ANOTHER BURST SLAMMED THROUGH THE THIN WALL OF THE COCKPIT, AND THE PILOT SAGGED ACROSS THE STICK...



THE COLONEL FELT THE PLANE
LURCH AND GO SPINNING DOWNWARDS...

THE
PILOT'S HAD
IT /

THIS
IS IT,
COLONEL /

BONNOR SAW THE DESERT LEAPING UP TO MEET THEM. THEN THERE
WAS A GRINDING, SPLINTERING CRASH, AND A BONE-SHATTERING
IMPACT FOLLOWED BY COMPLETE SILENCE. BONNOR TRIED TO DRAG
HIMSELF FROM HIS SEAT, BUT...

I CAN'T
MOVE! I'M
TRAPPED!

HE SAW THAT LAMBERT HAD STRUGGLED OUT, APPARENTLY UNHURT. SUDDENLY A BLINDING SHEET OF FLAME FLASHED ACROSS THE FUSELAGE. LEAKING FUEL HAD BEEN IGNITED BY A SHORTING ELECTRIC CABLE.



ABOVE THE CRACKLING OF THE FLAMES WHICH WERE BEGINNING TO SWEEP THE INSIDE OF THE PLANE, BONNOR HEARD LAMBERT'S VOICE...

HANG ON, SIR! I'LL SOON GET YOU OUT OF THIS!



SOMEHOW, LAMBERT MANAGED TO FORCE HIS WAY THROUGH THE CURTAIN OF FLAME AND DRAG BONNOR CLEAR.



SECONDS AFTER THEY HAD LEFT THE AIRCRAFT, THERE WAS A DEAFENING EXPLOSION AS ONE OF THE PETROL TANKS BLEW UP. 'BLUTCHER' BONNOR WAS FLUNG TO THE GROUND...





BONNOR MANAGED TO PUT THE FIRE OUT— BUT THEN HE SAW THAT LAMBERT HAD A BAD HEAD INJURY...

GOOD GRIEF /
HE'S DEAD /
HE MUST HAVE
BEEN STRUCK BY
A PIECE OF
FLYING METAL /



HE WOULD HAVE
BEEN ALIVE NOW IF HE
HADN'T COME BACK TO
RESCUE ME / I OWE MY
LIFE TO HIM /



'BUTCHER' BONNOR SUDDENLY REALISED THE GRIM TRUTH. HE WAS ALONE IN THE DESERT, WITH TWO DEAD MEN AS HIS COMPANIONS...

IF I MAKE MY WAY EAST, I MUST RUN INTO SOMEONE SOONER OR LATER, EVEN IF I HAVE TO GO AS FAR AS THE NILE VALLEY...

IT WAS THEN, AS HE LOOKED DOWN AT THE CRUMPLED FIGURE OF MAJOR LAMBERT, THAT AN IDEA, WILD AND STARTLING, CAME TO THE COLONEL...

LAMBERT WAS GOING TO FIJI, TO RAISE A BATTALION OF FIGHTING MEN, AND I KNOW FIJI AND THE FIJIANS ALMOST AS WELL AS HE DID!

THE DEAD MAJOR'S
PAYBOOK AND PAPERS
WERE STILL IN THE
POCKET OF HIS
BATTLEDRESS...

SUPPOSE I TOOK ON
HIS IDENTITY AND WENT
TO FIJI IN HIS PLACE? IF I
RAISED AND TRAINED A
BATTALION, I'D GET INTO
ACTION WITH IT. BUT IF I
STAY AS MYSELF, I'LL BE
A BASE WALLAH FOR
THE REST OF MY LIFE...



NO-ONE WOULD
KNOW ME IN THE PACIFIC
AREA. 'BLUTCHER' BONNOR
WILL BE DEAD / LAMBERT
HAS NO FAMILY, SAVE A
FATHER WHO HASN'T SEEN
HIM FOR YEARS... I'LL BE
MAJOR ROBERT LAMBERT...



HE KNEW HE WAS TAKING A RISK, BUT RISKS HAD NEVER FRIGHTENED 'BUTCHER' BONNOR. HE CHANGED UNIFORMS AND PAPERS WITH THE DEAD MAN, AND LOOKED DOWN AT LAMBERT FOR THE LAST TIME...



THEY'LL NEVER SUSPECT IT'S NOT ME... NO-ONE WILL HAVE ANY REASON TO THINK IT'S NOT COLONEL 'BUTCHER' BONNOR...

DOGGEDLY THE COLONEL SET HIS FACE TOWARDS THE EAST AND STARTED HIS LONG, LONELY TRUDGE. HIS BRUISED LIMBS ACHED, AND HIS BURNS WERE AGONISING. UNDER THE BLISTERING SUN, EVERY STEP WAS TORTURE...



I'VE GOT TO KEEP GOING... GOT TO!

LATE THAT EVENING, A TRUCK BELONGING TO THE LONG-RANGE DESERT GROUP, RETURNING FROM A MISSION IN KUFRA, SPOTTED A LONE FIGURE IN THE DISTANCE...

IT'S ONE OF OUR CHAPS, BY THE LOOK OF HIM...



THEY FOUND THE STAGGERING, PAIN-WRACKED FIGURE OF 'MAJOR LAMBERT'. HE WAS ALMOST DELIRIOUS, BUT HE MANAGED TO GASP OUT AN ACCOUNT OF WHAT HAD HAPPENED...

THE PLANE IS BACK THERE SOMEWHERE. COLONEL BONNOR WAS IN IT - HE'S DEAD! AND SO IS THE PILOT...



Chapter 3. The Fuzzies

NEXT DAY, FOUND 'MAJOR LAMBERT' IN ABBASIEH HOSPITAL. THE NURSE WHO BANDAGED HIS FACE NEVER GUESSED THAT HE WAS REALLY THE COLONEL BONNOR WHOSE TRAGIC DEATH IN THE DESERT WAS HEADLINE NEWS...

...HE MUST HAVE BEEN A TERRIBLE MAN! THEY SAY HE DIDN'T CARE HOW MANY MEN WERE KILLED AS LONG AS HE GOT HIS OBJECTIVE...

HE ONLY DID HIS DUTY / MEN DO GET KILLED IN WAR, NURSE...

WITHIN THREE WEEKS 'MAJOR LAMBERT' WAS CONVALESCING. HE WAS STROLLING IN GEZIREH GARDENS WHEN HE BUMPED INTO A STAFF OFFICER WHO STARED AS THOUGH HE HAD SEEN A GHOST...

GOOD GRIEF, BONNOR!



AS BONNOR TRIED TO HURRY PAST, THE OFFICER GRABBED HIM.

HENRY! HENRY BONNOR! BUT-BUT YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD! AND WHAT THE HECK ARE YOU DOING IN A MAJOR'S UNIFORM?



'BUTCHER' BONNOR SAW ALL HIS SCHEMES IN DANGER OF RUIN BY THIS CHANCE ENCOUNTER. THE OFFICER WAS CHARLIE CASSON, WHO HAD SERVED WITH HIM IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR. DESPERATELY, HE APPEALED TO HIM...



KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN, CHARLIE! I'LL EXPLAIN EVERYTHING...

COLONEL CASSON LISTENED IN BEWILDERMENT AND AMAZEMENT...

SO THERE YOU HAVE IT, CHARLIE! YOU RECOGNISED ME BECAUSE YOU'D KNOWN ME FOR YEARS, BUT IT'S NOT LIKELY ANYONE ELSE WILL.



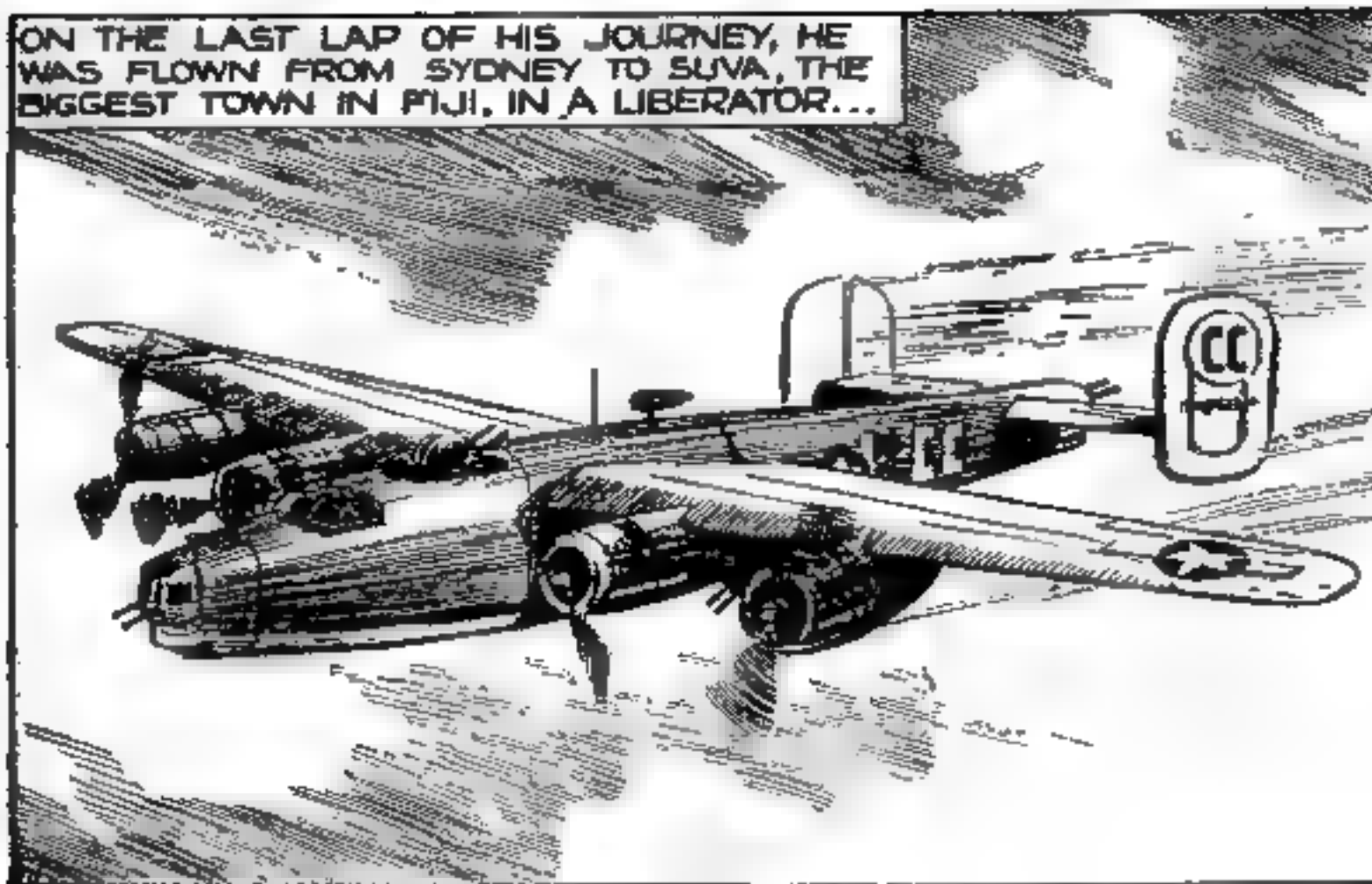
YOU SAVED MY LIFE ONCE, HENRY—AT YPRES. I WON'T GIVE YOU AWAY AS LONG AS THE WAR LASTS. BUT AFTERWARDS—I DON'T KNOW! IT'S THE CRAZIEST THING I EVER HEARD OF!

BONNOR'S GREATEST FEAR WAS THAT HE WOULD BE INTRODUCED TO SOMEONE WHO KNEW THE REAL MAJOR LAMBERT. BUT EVERYTHING WENT WELL, AND SOON HE WAS BOARDING A TROOPSHIP BOUND FOR AUSTRALIA - AND FIJI...



THE TESTING TIME WILL COME WHEN I LAND IN FIJI. HOPE THERE'S NO-ONE THERE WHO KNOWS LAMBERT TOO WELL!

ON THE LAST LAP OF HIS JOURNEY, HE WAS FLOWN FROM SYDNEY TO SUVA, THE BIGGEST TOWN IN FIJI, IN A LIBERATOR...



OLD MEMORIES CAME FLOODING BACK TO HIM AS HE STEPPED OUT ON TO THE AIRFIELD. IT WAS LIKE COMING HOME...



NOTHING SEEMS TO HAVE CHANGED! THE PLACE LOOKS JUST THE SAME...

HE WAS MET BY A YOUNG AUSTRALIAN CAPTAIN...

MY NAME'S EDMONDS, SIR! I'M TO BE YOUR ADJUTANT.

GLAD TO MEET YOU, EDMONDS!



ON THE DRIVE TO THE CAMP, JUST OUTSIDE THE TOWN, CAPTAIN EDMONDS PUT 'MAJOR LAMBERT' IN THE PICTURE.

WE'VE GOT HUNDREDS OF POTENTIAL RECRUITS LINED UP, SIR. IT WILL BE UP TO YOU TO INTERVIEW THEM, PICK OUT THE ONES YOU WANT, AND THEN ORGANISE TRAINING.



THE COLONEL FOUND HIMSELF LIKING THE OUTSPOKEN YOUNG AUSTRALIAN ...

WHAT ABOUT OFFICERS?

THEY'RE ALL AUSTRALIANS LIKE MYSELF, MAJOR. WE'VE ALL SEEN SERVICE IN NEW GUINEA, SO WE KNOW THE FORM.



THE FIRST THING 'MAJOR LAMBERT' DID WAS TO MEET THE OFFICERS. AT THAT MOMENT THERE WERE ONLY TEN OF THEM, BUT THEIR NUMBERS WOULD BE DOUBLED AS THE BATTALION TOOK SHAPE...

...THIS IS LIEUTENANT 'SNOWY' CARSTEN, SIR. HE WAS ONE OF THE BEST SNIPERS IN NEW GUINEA.

JUST THE MAN FOR MUSKETRY INSTRUCTOR!

'MAJOR LAMBERT' STARTED THAT DAY TO INTERVIEW EACH RECRUIT. HE FOUND HE HAD NO DIFFICULTY AT ALL WITH THE LANGUAGE...

ONCE YOU LEARN THESE ISLAND DIALECTS, YOU NEVER FORGET 'EM.

THE NATIVES WERE MUSCULAR AND FIT. ONE MAN IN PARTICULAR IMPRESSED 'THE BUTCHER' WITH HIS CARRIAGE AND PROUD BEARING...

YOUR NAME IS KIOGA ? WHERE DO YOU COME FROM ?

FROM THE VILLAGE OF KINORU, TALUBADA. I AM THE CHIEF !

WHY DO YOU WISH TO JOIN THIS BATTALION, KIOGA ?

I AM A WARRIOR, TALUBADA. UNDER THE WHITE KING, WE FIJANS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN HAPPY. HIS ENEMIES ARE OUR ENEMIES...

LATER, BONNOR TALKED IT OVER WITH HIS ADJUTANT...

OUR N.C.O.'S WILL ALL BE NATIVES. THIS CHAP KIOGA IS JUST WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR...

TOO RIGHT HE IS, SIR ! HOW ABOUT MAKING HIM A SERGEANT, RIGHT AWAY ? HE'S GREEN - BUT HE'LL LEARN.

SOON THE BATTALION WAS NEARLY NINE HUNDRED STRONG. 'BUTCHER' BONNOR FELT PRIDE SWELLING IN HIM AS HE WATCHED THEM DRILLING...

THEY PICK THINGS UP LIKE BORN SOLDIERS! THEIR TURNOUT WOULDN'T SHAME THE GUARDS!

MANY OF THE FIJIAN BECAME CRACK SHOTS...

EXCELLENT!

EIGHT BULLS OUT OF TEN SHOTS TO CORPORAL NAMURO, SIR.



NIGHT PATROLS AND SCOUTING WERE SECOND NATURE TO THEM, BUT IT WAS BAYONET FIGHTING THAT THEY ENJOYED MOST. .

I PITY THE JAPS THAT GET IN FRONT OF THESE MEN!



SIX MONTHS LATER, 'MAJOR LAMBERT' HAD THE BATTALION TRAINED FOR BATTLE - BUT THEN HE RECEIVED A LETTER FROM THE WAR OFFICE THAT STUNNED HIM. . .

THEY WANT TO SEND SOME COLONEL FROM THE MIDDLE EAST TO TAKE OVER THE BATTALION! MY BATTALION!

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT, SIR?



I'M GOING TO APPEAL
IN PERSON TO THE HIGHEST
AUTHORITY IN THE PACIFIC!
IF I GET HIM ON MY SIDE,
I MAY STAND A CHANCE OF
KEEPING THE BATTALION...



SO 'MAJOR LAMBERT' FLEW TO
BRISBANE AND SAW THE GENERAL
IN CHARGE OF PACIFIC OPERATIONS...

AS AN AMERICAN, MAJOR,
I CAN'T INTERFERE DIRECTLY
IN THIS MATTER. BUT I'LL
USE MY INFLUENCE FOR YOU.
YOU SEEM TO ME TO BE
GETTING A RAW DEAL.



TWO WEEKS LATER 'MAJOR
LAMBERT' RECEIVED ANOTHER
LETTER FROM THE WAR OFFICE...

CONGRATULATIONS,
SIR!

'YOU ARE TO
HOLD THE TEMPORARY
RANK OF LIEUTENANT
COLONEL, AND WILL
REMAIN IN ACTIVE
COMMAND OF
YOUR UNIT...'



BUT WHEN 'THE FUZZIES' - AS EVERYONE CALLED THEM - EVENTUALLY LANDED AT PORT MORESBY, THE NEW GUINEA BASE, THEY WERE PUT ON ROADMAKING.

PERHAPS THIS IS JUST TO GET THEM ACCLIMATISED. WE OUGHT TO SEE FIGHTING SOON!



SEVERAL TIMES THEY WERE HEAVILY BOMBED, AND BEHAVED WITH SUCH COOLNESS AND INDIFFERENCE TO DANGER THAT 'THE BUTCHER' FELT GROWING ADMIRATION FOR THEM..

LOOK AT THAT / NOTHING SCARES THEM!

THEY'RE THE RIGHT STUFF! REAL DINKUM SOLDIERS!



BUT THE WEEKS
DRAGGED INTO MONTHS,
AND STILL THE FIJANS
PRESSED AND
LABOURED. THEN
KIOGA - NOW THE
REGIMENTAL SERGEANT
MAJOR - HEADED A
DEPUTATION OF
N.C.O.s...

WHEN ARE WE GOING
TO FIGHT, TALIBADA ? WE
ARE WARRIORS, NOT
LABOURERS !

I WILL DO WHAT
I CAN TO GET YOU
INTO THE FIGHTING
LINE, MY
BROTHERS !

"BUTCHER" BONNOR HIMSELF WAS FRUSTRATED
AND BITTERLY DISAPPOINTED. IN THE END, HE
MANAGED TO SEE THE AUSTRALIAN GENERAL
IN COMMAND OF THAT SECTOR...

I'VE TRAINED A BODY
OF FIRST-CLASS FIGHTING
MEN, AND THEY ARE
PUT ON WORK THAT
COULD BE DONE BY
CIVILIANS !

I'M SORRY, COLONEL -
BUT I DON'T TRUST NATIVE
TROOPS / IF THEY BROKE UNDER
PRESSURE IT COULD LEAD TO
DISASTER...

THE 'BUTCHER' RETURNED TO HIS UNIT IN A TOWERING RAGE. THEY WERE NOW CAMPED NEAR THE COAST, BUILDING AN AIR-STRIP. THAT NIGHT HE FACED THE BEACH WITH EDMONDS...

IF THERE WAS ANY WAY OF TAKING THE BATTALION UP THE LINE WITHOUT ORDERS AND GETTING THEM INVOLVED IN THE FIGHTING, I'D DO IT! BY HEAVENS, I WOULD!

IT WOULD MEAN THE END OF YOUR CAREER, SIR!

AS THEY WALKED BACK TO THE CAMP, LEUTENANT CARSTEN MET THEM, LOOKING AGITATED...

I'VE GOT SOME BAD NEWS FOR YOU, SIR. SERGEANT-MAJOR KIOGA HAS DESERTED! GONE BUSH!

KIOGA! GOOD GRIEF!

KIOGA WAS THE BEST MAN WE HAD! WHY THE DEVIL DID HE DO IT?

HE'S BROWNE OFF, SIR. THEY ALL ARE. THEY WANT TO SEE ACTION.

HE'S A PROUD MAN, AND HE WOULDN'T HAVE LEFT HIS VILLAGE IF HE'D THOUGHT HE WAS GOING TO BE A LABOURER!

Chapter 4. Path to Glory

BACK IN HIS TENT, 'COLONEL LAMBERT' DID NOT FIND IT EASY TO SETTLE DOWN TO SLEEP, FOR HE WAS TORMENTED BY BITTER THOUGHTS...

I SEEM FATED TO BE A BASE WALLAH, AFTER ALL! I'VE DONE MY BEST TO GET INTO ACTION - BUT PERHAPS THAT POOR, BITTER YOUNG DEVIL OF A TANK GUNNER WAS RIGHT BACK AT EL ALAMEIN. I'LL DIE IN BED!

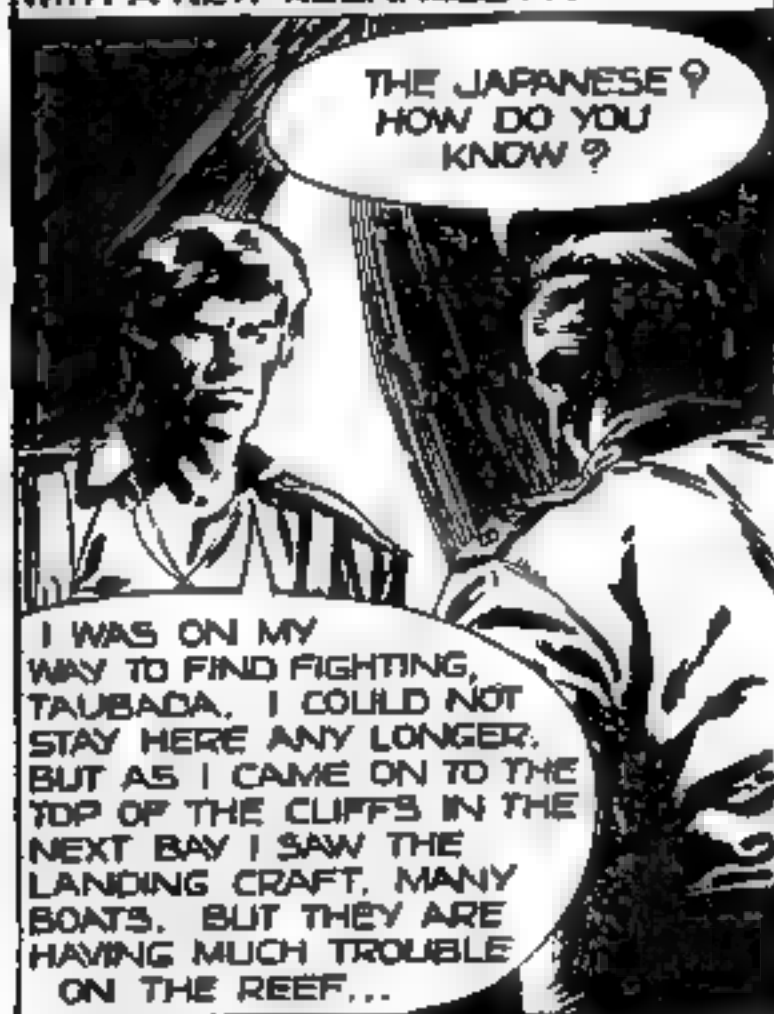
HE WAS STILL RESTLESS AN HOUR LATER WHEN HE HEARD THE RUSTLE OF MOVEMENT. A SHADOW FILLED THE TENT OPENING.

KIOGA!
SO YOU'VE
COME
BACK!

KIOGA BEGAN TO SPEAK EXCITEDLY AND AS THE TORRENT OF WORDS POURED FROM HIM, 'BUTCHER' BONNOR STRAIGHTENED UP WITH A JERK, ALL HIS NERVES TINGLING...



KIOGA'S EXCITED FACE WAS ALIGHT WITH A NEW KEENNESS...



I WAS ON MY WAY TO FIND FIGHTING, TAUBADA. I COULD NOT STAY HERE ANY LONGER. BUT AS I CAME ON TO THE TOP OF THE CLIFFS IN THE NEXT BAY I SAW THE LANDING CRAFT, MANY BOATS. BUT THEY ARE HAVING MUCH TROUBLE ON THE REEF...

THE C.O. WAS ON HIS FEET IN A FLASH, REACHING FOR HIS BELT AND REVOLVER...



YES, TAUBADA!

SOON, 'COLONEL LAMBERT' WAS
BRIEFING HIS OFFICERS...



BY LANDING A STRONG
FORCE IN A SOFT REAR AREA, THE
JAPS ARE HOPING TO TAKE US BY
SURPRISE. I'VE ALREADY SENT A
RUNNER WITH THE NEWS TO THE
AUSTRALIANS. BUT IN THE
MEANTIME, WE ARE THE NEAREST
FIGHTING UNIT. IT'S UP TO US!

SILENTLY, SWIFTLY, THE FIJIAN'S SLIPPED
THROUGH THE JUNGLE AND BEGAN TO
CLOSE IN FROM THREE DIRECTIONS
ON THE BAY...



BONNOR HIMSELF LED ONE
OF THE COLUMNS...

SOON THEY REACHED THE EDGE
OF THE SCRUB-COVERED CLIFFS
THAT FRINGED THE COVE.

KIOGA WAS
RIGHT / THE JAPS ARE
HAVING TROUBLE FINDING
A WAY THROUGH THE REEF,
AND THE STRONG TIDE
IS AGAINST THEM.

LUCKY
FOR US, SIR /
OTHERWISE WE
SHOULD NEVER HAVE
GOT HERE IN
TIME



THE LEADING JAPS WERE SCRAMBLING UP THE CLIFF FACE WHEN 'COLONEL LAMBERT' FIRED A RED ROCKET - THE AGREED SIGNAL. AS IT CURVED AND BURST, GLOWING, IN THE STILL AIR, THE ATTACKERS HALTED MOMENTARILY.

WE HAVE BEEN SEEN, CAPTAIN SAN!

NEXT MOMENT, THE SILENCE OF THE NIGHT WAS SHATTERED BY A TREMENDOUS BURST OF RIFLE AND BREN-GUN FIRE. THE LEADING RANKS OF THE JAPS WERE SWEEPED LIKE FLIES FROM THE CLIFF FACE...



A MURDEROUS VOLUME OF FIRE,
RISING TO A FURIOUS CRESCENDO,
NOW LASHED THE BEACH AND THE
PACKED LANDING CRAFT...



IN VAIN, THE JAPANESE OFFICERS TRIED TO REFORM
THEIR MEN, BUT THE DEADLY HAIL OF BULLETS WAS
SCYTHING GREAT SWATHES
IN THEIR RANKS

FORWARD,
YOU COWARDLY
DOGS! FOR THE
HONOUR OF THE
EMPEROR...



THE JAPS WHO HAD NOT YET LANDED WERE TRAPPED. AS THEY TRIED TO SCRAMBLE ASHORE, JOSTLING AND SHOUTING, THEY WERE CUT DOWN...



'THE BUTCHER' NOW FIRED A SECOND ROCKET, AND AS IT EXPLODED, SCATTERING CRIMSON SPARKS, THE WHOLE FIJIAN BATTALION ROSE FROM COVER AND WENT SLIDING AND LEAPING DOWN THE CLIFF...

ATTACK!
ATTACK!



NOTHING COULD STOP THE IMPETUS
OF THAT DEATH-DEFYING CHARGE

COME ON,
MY BROTHERS!
THIS IS WHAT YOU
WANTED!



THOSE BARGES WHICH
HAD NOT YET LANDED,
TURNED BACK, THE
OTHER JAPS,
PENNEED IN THE
KILLING GROUND
OF THE BEACH,
WERE WIPED
OUT...



BY THE TIME TWO AUSTRALIAN
COMPANIES ARRIVED, THE
BATTLE WAS OVER. IN THE
GREY DAWN, THE AUSSIES
STARED IN AMAZEMENT AT
THE SCENE...

STONE THE
CROWS / LOOK
AT THIS /

THESE
FUZZIES KNOW
HOW TO FIGHT, MY
COLONIAL DATH /



Chapter 5. *Sounds of Battle*

FROM THAT MOMENT, THE FAME OF THE FIJIAN BATTALION WAS ASSURED AND 'COLONEL LAMBERT' WENT ONCE AGAIN TO SEE THE AUSTRALIAN GENERAL.

HOW CAN I REFUSE, COLONEL ? YOU'VE PROVED YOUR POINT !

SURELY, SIR, AFTER THIS, YOU'LL LET MY MEN TAKE THEIR PLACE IN THE LINE ?

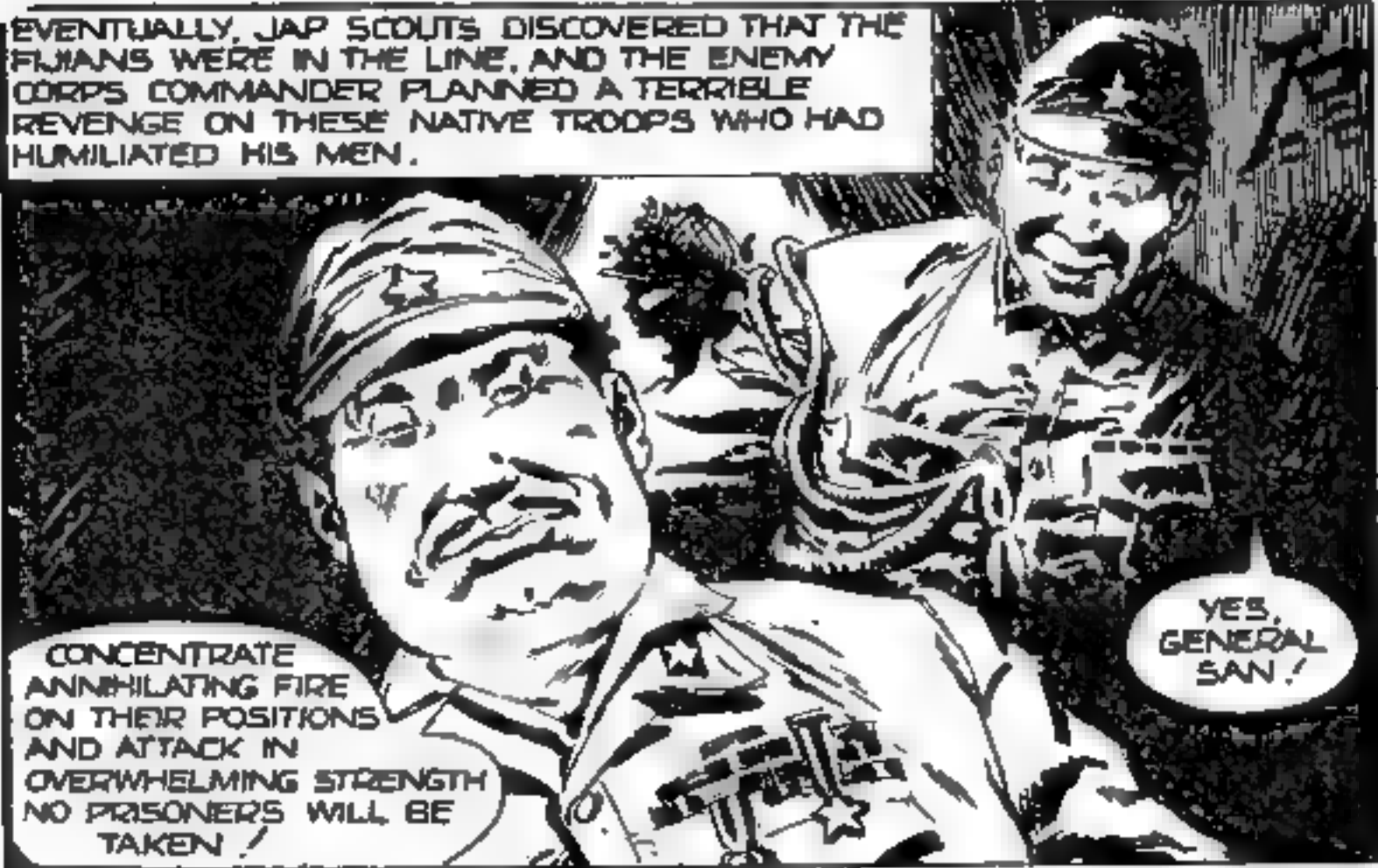
A WEEK LATER, THE FIJIAN RELIEVED AN AUSTRALIAN BATTALION IN A VITAL SECTOR...

SAY, LOOK AT THESE BLOKES ! WHO ARE THEY ?

THE FUZZIES FROM FIJI ! FAIR DINKUM FIGHTERS !



EVENTUALLY, JAP SCOUTS DISCOVERED THAT THE FIJANS WERE IN THE LINE, AND THE ENEMY CORPS COMMANDER PLANNED A TERRIBLE REVENGE ON THESE NATIVE TROOPS WHO HAD HUMILIATED HIS MEN.



CONCENTRATE
ANNIHILATING FIRE
ON THEIR POSITIONS
AND ATTACK IN
OVERWHELMING STRENGTH
NO PRISONERS WILL BE
TAKEN!

YES,
GENERAL
SAN!

THE FOLLOWING AFTERNOON,
A DESULTORY SHELLING AND
MORTARS BEGAN TO POUND
THE FIJIAN FOXHOLES.
'BLUTCHER' BONNOR WAS
QUICK TO NOTICE SOMETHING
SIGNIFICANT ABOUT IT.

THOSE AREN'T THE SAME BATTERIES
FIRING ON OUR LINE, EDMONDS! THEY
ARE DIFFERENT BATTERIES, TAKING IT
IN TURNS TO REGISTER. YOU KNOW
WHAT THAT MEANS?



NO, SIR!



THEY ARE PREPARING
A CONCENTRATED AND HEAVY
BOMBARDMENT FROM A
SCORE OF FRESH BATTERIES
THAT MUST HAVE BEEN SET
UP. THAT MEANS AN
ATTACK—PROBABLY TONIGHT!



LATER, THE C.O. GAVE
AN UNUSUAL ORDER...

I'M NOT GOING
TO LET MY MEN BE
SHELLED TO PIECES—
SO THEY WILL VACATE
THEIR POSITIONS.

YOU MEAN—
PULL THEM BACK,
SIR?

THE ADJUTANT SPOKE
INCREDULOUSLY...

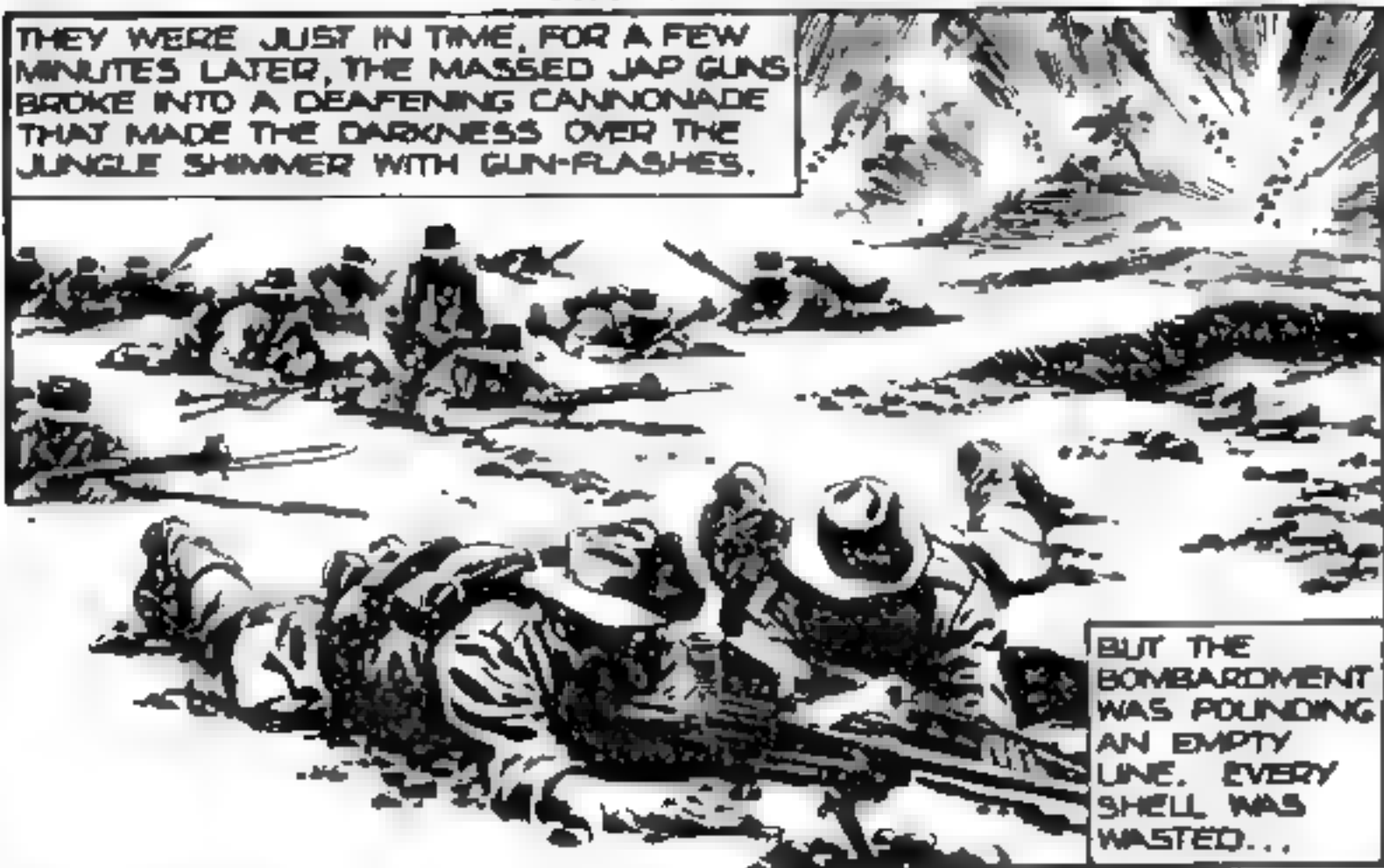
WITHDRAW THEM?
OF COURSE NOT!
WE'LL TAKE THEM
FORWARD INTO NO
MAN'S LAND, CLOSER
TO THE ENEMY!



SO AS SOON AS IT WAS DARK THE FIJIAN'S
LEFT THEIR PITS AND FOXHOLES AND
SLIPPED INTO NO MAN'S LAND.



THEY WERE JUST IN TIME, FOR A FEW MINUTES LATER, THE MASSED JAP GUNS BROKE INTO A DEAFENING CANNONADE THAT MADE THE DARKNESS OVER THE JUNGLE SHIMMER WITH GUN-FLASHES.



BUT THE BOMBARDMENT WAS POUNDING AN EMPTY LINE. EVERY SHELL WAS WASTED...

THE BOMBARDMENT DIED AS SUDDENLY AS IT HAD BEGUN AND THE HIROHITO REGIMENT — THE FLOWER OF THE JAPANESE ARMY IN NEW GUINEA — CHARGED.



THEN THE NIGHT WAS SHOT WITH
FLAME AND THUNDER AS THE
FIJIAN'S OPENED UP ..



UNDER THAT HURRICANE OF
LEAD, THE LEADING JAPS
WERE SMASHED INTO THE
GROUND ..

THE ATTACKERS HAD BEEN EXPECTING ONLY
SLIGHT RESISTANCE FROM A FEW SHELL-
STUNNED SURVIVORS. INSTEAD, THEY WERE
MET BY MURDEROUS POINT-BLANK FIRE.



IN A FEW MOMENTS THE ATTACK WAS SHATTERED, AND AS THE REMNANTS OF THE ONCE PROUD ENEMY REGIMENT BEGAN TO FALL BACK, 'THE BUTCHER' ROSE TO HIS FEET.

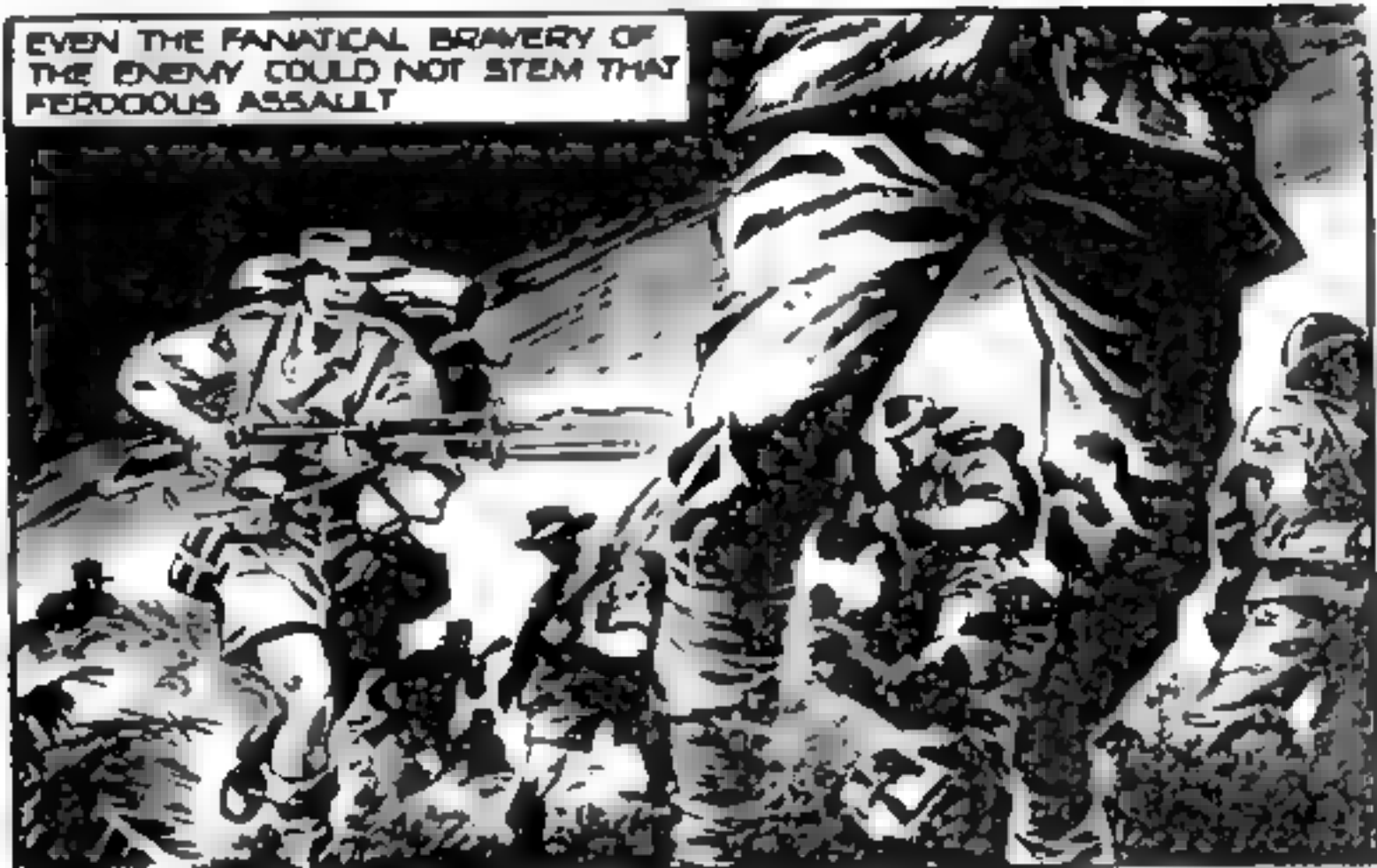
CHARGE!



THE FIJIAN WARRIORS GAVE A DEEP-THROATED ROAR AND LEAPT FORWARD, BAYONETS GLINTING IN THE STARLIGHT. YOUNGER, FASTER THAN THEIR CO THEY SWEEP PAST AND BEYOND HIM.



EVEN THE FANATICAL BRAVERY OF THE ENEMY COULD NOT STEM THAT FEROCIOUS ASSAULT



SO FAST AND FAR DID THEY GO THAT THEY WERE IN THE JAPANESE BATTALION HEAD-QUARTERS BEFORE THEIR WHITE OFFICERS COULD STOP THEM

ENOUGH / IT IS TIME TO WITHDRAW, MY BROTHERS /



AS THE FIJANS RELUCTANTLY CAME BACK, BRINGING THEIR WOUNDED WITH THEM, 'BUTCHER' BONNOR WATCHED THEM WITH PRIDE.



IN ONE FIERCE ACTION AFTER ANOTHER, THE FIJANS GAINED CUNNING AND BATTLE EXPERIENCE TO ADD TO THEIR GALLANTRY AND DASH. SOON THEY BECAME A LEGEND...



IN THE VITAL FINCHAVEN ATTACK
THEY WERE GIVEN THE HONOUR
OF STORMING THE STRONGEST
PART OF THE JAPANESE HILL
POSITION.

BY THUNDER /
THE FUZZIES HAVE
TAKEN THE RIDGE /
NOW THE WHOLE LINE
WILL BE ABLE TO
ADVANCE .



BUT IT WAS AFTER THIS ATTACK THAT 'BUTCHER' BONNOR OVERHEARD TWO AUSTRALIANS OF A NEIGHBOURING BATTALION TALKING...



I NOTICE THAT
THE FUZZIES' C.O.
NEVER GETS HURT!

TOO RIGHT HE DOESN'T!
IN THIS WAR, THE HIGHER YOUR
RANK THE SAFER YOU ARE. HIS
MEN GET KILLED - BUT HE'LL
ALWAYS BE ALL RIGHT!

'BUTCHER' BONNOR'S MOUTH
TIGHTENED BITTERLY. IT WAS
THE OLD JIBE!



IS THAT WHAT THEY
THINK? THAT I'M SCARED
TO RISK MY OWN LIFE?
WELL, I'LL SHOW 'EM!

HIS CHANCE SOON CAME THE FIJIAN'S
WERE GIVEN A JAP STRONGPOINT
KNOWN AS KANGAROO HILL AS THEIR
NEXT OBJECTIVE.



IN THIS ATTACK, I
SHALL GO FORWARD
WITH THE LEADING
COMPANY INSTEAD OF
STAYING BEHIND IN
THE COMMAND
POST.

BUT, SR,
YOU CAN'T DO
THAT! YOUR
PLACE IS BEHIND,
DIRECTING THE
BATTLE...

THE C.O.'S BELLOW OF RAGE
MADE EDMONDS JUMP...

ARE YOU
TELLING ME
WHAT MY DUTY
IS, CAPTAIN?
GIVE THE
ORDERS
IN THIS
BATTALION!



THIS TIME, ARTILLERY
SUPPORT HAD BEEN
WEAK, AND AS THE
FIJIAN'S SWEEP UP
KANGAROO HILL, THEY
CAME UNDER MURDEROUS
CROSSFIRE FROM THE
ENEMY. FOR ONCE THEY
WAVERED -AND 'BUTCHER'
BONNOR SPRANG
FORWARD...

COME ON,
MY BROTHERS!
FOLLOW ME!



FIVE YARDS FROM THE CREST, A BULLET IN THE THIGH STINGED HIM, BUT HE KEPT ON. AT POINT-BLANK RANGE HE SHOT TWO MACHINE-GUNNERS ...



ANOTHER BULLET CAUGHT HIM IN THE CHEST, AND HE FELL AS HE WENT DOWN. SERGEANT-MAJOR KIOGA AND SEVERAL OTHER MEN GAVE A GREAT ROAR OF FURY ...



FOR LONG, VIOLENT
MINUTES, THE BATTLE
RAGED OVER THE
FALLEN COLONEL...

THE LITTLE
YELLOW MEN SHALL
NOT HAVE HIM /



THEN, WITH ONE LAST FIERCE RUSH,
THE GIANT FIJIAN SWEPT THE
JAPS FROM THE CREST.



The Warrior

AFTERWARDS, SERGEANT-MAJOR KIOGA FOUND THAT THEIR BELOVED C.O. WAS STILL ALIVE, AND HE AND ANOTHER MAN GENTLY CARRIED HIM BACK...



BACK AT THE FIRST-AID POST THEY SAID FAREWELL TO 'COLONEL LAMBERT'...

COME BACK TO US, OLD WARRIOR! WITHOUT YOU, WE ARE AS CHILDREN WITHOUT A FATHER!



EVENTUALLY, 'BUTCHER' BONNOR WAS CARRIED INTO A DAKOTA AND FLOWN WITH OTHER WOUNDED TO SYDNEY.



IN THE HOSPITAL THERE, THEY DID THEIR BEST FOR 'COLONEL LAMBERT', BUT HIS WOUNDS WERE TOO SEVERE. ONCE, WHEN THEY THOUGHT HE WAS ASLEEP, HE HEARD TWO NURSES TALKING...

POOR MAN / HE WON'T GET BETTER, YOU KNOW. THE DOCTORS WERE TALKING ABOUT IT LAST NIGHT...




COLONEL BONNOR'S LIPS TWISTED SARDONICALLY

SO I'M GOING TO DIE IN BED, AFTER ALL / BUT I THINK THAT YOUNG TANK GUNNER BACK AT ALAMEIN WOULD APPROVE, IF HE KNEW HOW IT HAD COME ABOUT...




THEN A NURSE CAME - WITH A FRAIL,
WHITE-HAIRED OLD MAN...

COLONEL LAMBERT -
HERE IS YOUR FATHER!
HE HAS FLOWN ALL THE
WAY FROM ENGLAND
TO SEE YOU!



IT TOOK
'BUTCHER'
BONNOR A FEW
CONFUSED
MOMENTS TO
REALISE THAT
THE VISITOR
WAS THE REAL
ROBERT
LAMBERT'S
FATHER -
COLONEL
ASHTON
LAMBERT, D.S.O.



GOOD GRIEF!
HE'LL SEE AT ONCE
I'M NOT HIS SON!
WELL, THE TRUTH
MAY AS WELL
COME OUT...

THEN HE REALISED THAT COLONEL ASHTON LAMBERT WAS ALMOST BLIND!



IT WAS THE FIRST COLONEL 'BUTCHER' BONNOR HAD HEARD ABOUT THE V.C., AND HE COULD ONLY STARE INCREDULOUSLY WHILST HIS 'FATHER' GRIPPED HIS HAND.



'BUTCHER' BONNOR REALISED THEN THAT HE COULD NOT TELL THE OLD GENTLEMAN THE TRUTH - THAT HE WAS NOT HIS SON. THAT MUCH HE OWED TO THE REAL ROBERT LAMBERT, WHO HAD GIVEN HIS LIFE FOR HIM IN THE DESERT.

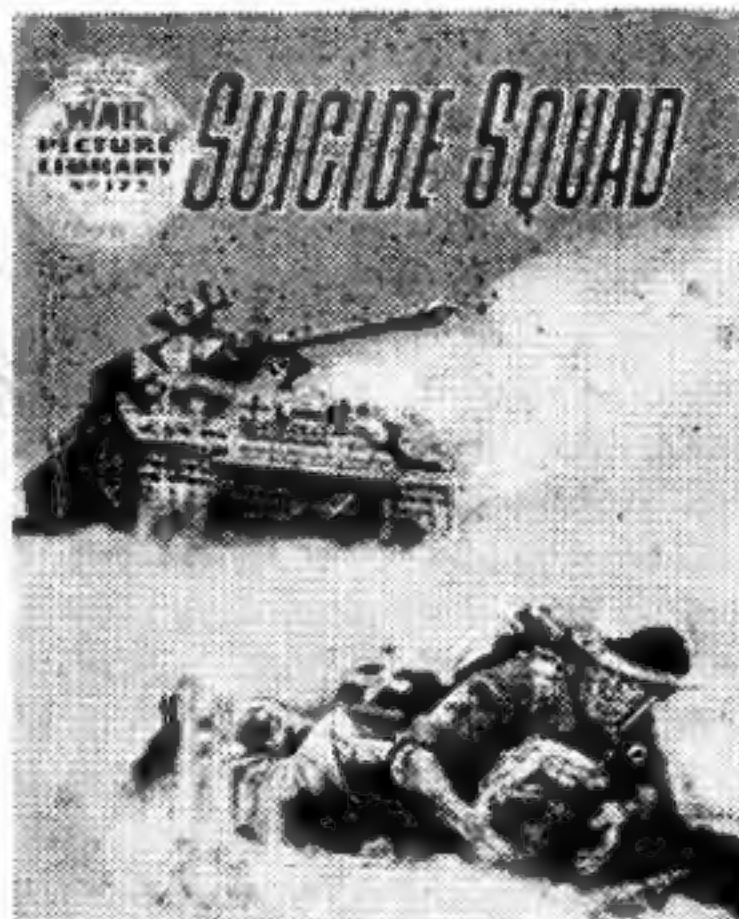


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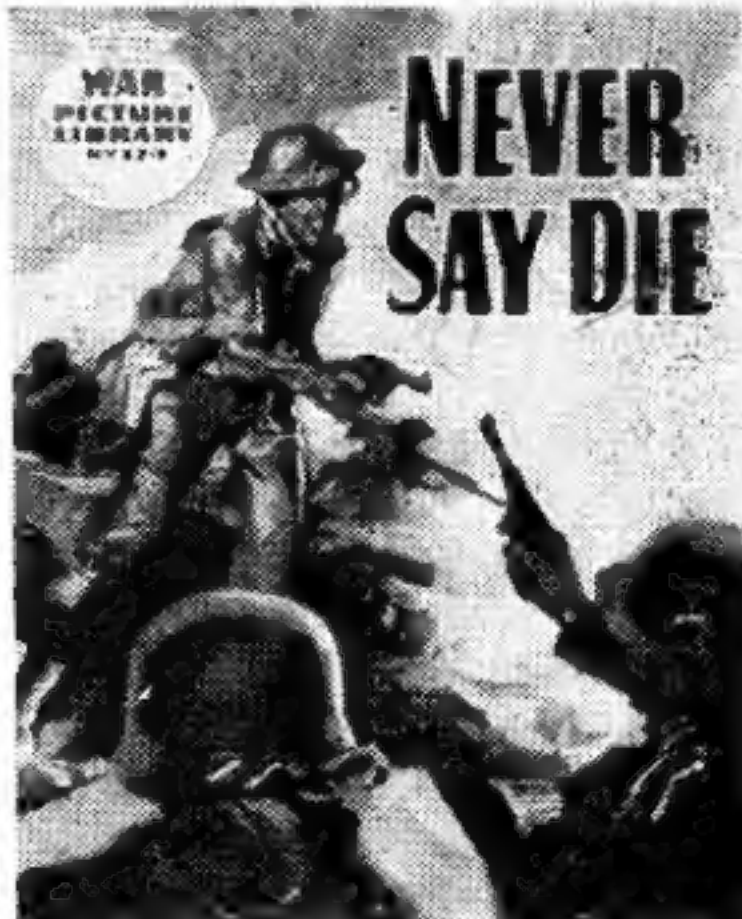
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